

# **Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders: Best Practices**

## **Prevention of FASD**

**Preventing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) involves educating women about the harmful effects of alcohol to an unborn baby and persuading women not to drink while they are pregnant or before they become pregnant.** The most effective approaches to reducing FASD in the United States have combined clinical programming, community resources, political and legislative efforts, social marketing techniques, and culture-specific strategies that are positive, non-punitive, encouraging, and involve pregnant women, partners of pregnant women, and pregnant women support networks. Prevention efforts must include public education efforts aimed at the entire population, not just women of child bearing age and pregnant women, appropriate treatment for women with high-risk drinking habits, and increased recognition and knowledge about FAS by professionals, educators, parents, and caregivers.

*“Broad-based, multifaceted efforts work best, combining society, individuals, institutions, family, peer groups.”* - Center on Alcoholism, Substance Abuse, and Addictions (CASAA), University of New Mexico

### **Strategies Shown to be Effective at Reducing Consumption of Alcohol during Pregnancy**

- Routine, prenatal screening for alcohol use with patient consent
- Limiting alcohol availability through legal means or pricing strategies
- Warning labels and posters
- Media approaches—social marketing techniques
- Multi-component substance abuse prevention programs
- Screening and identification procedures that lead to interventions in prenatal settings
- Drug education for pregnant teens attending prenatal clinics
- Training physicians/health professionals on treating women with addictive disorders
- Combining prenatal care with other services, such as public welfare, homelessness prevention, education/job training, behavioral health
- Respectful, flexible, gender-specific, and culturally specific, approaches to alcohol and substance abuse treatment
- Services with a single point of access addressing a range of issues
- Workplace health promotion programs
- Pregnancy planning that promote safe relationships
- Overall efforts to reduce alcohol and other substance abuse

- Market Street Research, Inc., Northampton, Massachusetts

**The National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome**

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